

May 2019
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Principal's Newsletter

Somers High School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are in the home stretch. It is hard to believe that we are halfway through May. Although the end of the year is near, we still have many activities and events to occupy our time until graduation. As always, this newsletter is designed to keep you informed about issues and/or concerns that may impact your student at Somers High School.

I am happy to report that the new cell phone policy is working great. Teachers are pleased with the results and the vast majority of our students are on board. Classroom interruptions have decreased nicely. Additionally, vaping problems have decreased overall. This has all been partly due to bathroom control, partly due to teacher education, and partly due to less interest amongst the student population. I am sure parent involvement has also helped stem the tide. In the June newsletter, I will elaborate a little further on a few other initiatives that will impact students next year. I am hoping you will find them as necessary as we do, in moving academic and behavioral standards higher.

On another note, please remember to **not** use the teacher lot to drop off children in the morning and/or pick-up in the afternoon. It creates traffic issues and I am concerned that an accident is waiting to happen. Your cooperation on these matters is greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any concerns. I am looking forward to working with each of you and to helping make our school the best it can possibly be.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Cotzin
Principal
Somers High School

Way to Go FBLA!
Future Business Leaders of America



On March 12th, Future Business Leaders of America members attended the annual State Leadership Conference with advisor and business teacher Mr. Mayo, as well as business teacher Mr. Clement. As in previous years, the students did not disappoint, demonstrating they have what it takes to compete against students throughout the entire state, in a wide variety of topics. And, to answer the real question on everyone's mind... YES - as per annual tradition, Mr. Mayo DID treat the entire group to Wendy's on the way back home. Below you can find the 17 recognitions earned by our students:

Congratulations!

Accounting 1 - Stephen Piescik - 5th place

Business Calculations - Mark Devlin - 5th place

Business Law - Ryder Remenik - 1st place

Business Law - Colin Watt - 4th place

Business Law - Emma Archambault - 5th place

Computer Applications - Billy Heller - 3rd place

Computer Applications - Nick Mendez - 4th place

Computer Applications - Kayla Scibelli - 5th place

Entrepreneurship - the team consisting of Andrew Brewer, Haley Swan, and Nate LaVallee - 5th place

Intro. to Business - Jack Gebo - 1st place

Organizational Leadership - Christian Chlebowski - 2nd place

Personal Finance - Shawn Gentilcore - 1st place

Sports and Entertainment Management - the team consisting of Jake Ellis, Tim Lynch, and Garreth Bowers - 4th place

Do You Know Cinco de Mayo?



What is Cinco de Mayo?

Do you know what the Cinco de Mayo holiday represents? The Honors Spanish 5 class had fun last week surveying one hundred of their fellow peers, family, and teachers to find the answer. They discovered that the majority of people thought that Cinco de Mayo either represented Independence Day or the Day of the Dead in Mexico. However, this is what the holiday is really about: the history of Cinco de Mayo starts on May 5, 1862, during the Franco-Mexican War. On this day in Puebla, Mexico, Mexican forces, considerably outnumbered, took on the French troops and ended up winning the battle. The Battle of Puebla was not significant in the long run of the war, but it was a morale booster and big victory for the town.

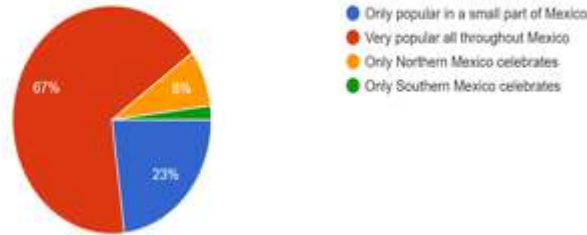
Fiestas!

One of the questions in the survey was, “How large is the celebration in Mexico?” with 67% of people saying that it is very popular all throughout Mexico. In reality, Cinco de Mayo is only celebrated largely in the small town of Puebla, Mexico. Some other parts of Mexico also take part in the celebration, with parades and recreations of the battle, but overall, Cinco de Mayo is not a holiday observed by Mexicans. In the U.S., Cinco de Mayo started to be celebrated by the Mexican-Americans during the civil rights movement. Then in the late 1980s, it became very largely commercialized, making the

celebration in the U.S much larger than in Mexico.

How large is the celebration in Mexico?

100 responses



Conclusion

Having taken Spanish throughout all of their years of education at Somers High School, these students have had the opportunity to learn about many different cultures from around the world. From reading about the experiences of immigrants coming to the United States to watching documentaries about the Spanish Civil War, these students understand the differences between the culture of our small town and the cultures of the world around us. Cinco de Mayo is a celebration that has been Americanized and has lost its true meaning over time. But with education and understanding, the true meaning of the holiday can be remembered and serve as a reminder that anything is possible with motivation and hope. Despite the Mexicans being far outnumbered by the French soldiers, they still won the battle as a result of their determination and devotion to their country.

Spartan eSports

The Spartan Gamers' Smite team, the Jumbo Snack Pack, competed in a pool of over 70 teams from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Hawaii, New Mexico, Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and even Alaska. The team made the playoffs in this national competition before falling to top-seeded Warren Central High School out of Bowling Green, Kentucky. The Jumbo Snack Pack included 5 graduating seniors and a freshman while winning 4 matches in the regular season.

The Rocket League team competed in a pool of team from all over Connecticut and cruised into the playoffs as the third-seeded team. Finna Shlep won their first playoff matchup against RHAM to advance to state semi finals. The team fell to Woodstock Academy in that penultimate match of the state tournament after a highly successful season.

We are excited to continue the action next year in the fall season as the platform adds new games on top of Rocket League, Smite, and League of Legends. Coaches, Pasquale DeMatteo and Tenley Stoltz, are looking forward to recruiting even more players to the Spartan Gamers next season.

NHS Blood Drive

The Somers High School National Honor Society sponsored a blood drive on April 24th. The members worked hard to recruit eligible donors, which got us off to a great start, and to support the American Red Cross personnel with the logistics to make sure the drive ran smoothly. The charge nurse was very impressed with the quality of our student helpers and they were thrilled that our community was able to donate 21 pints of blood! As a result of surpassing our goal (by 1 pint), Somers High School is eligible for a \$250 scholarship to be granted to one of our senior members. However, we are still waiting to confirm the necessary information with the Red Cross liaison. Co-advisors, Mrs. Angelica and Mrs. Burda, are proud of our members for stepping up to make a difference in so many people's lives. Also, thank you to Mrs. Neysen for her support throughout the day.

SEF Comes Through Again

Library Media Center Receives Somers Education Foundation Grant for Makerspace

The library media center is thrilled to announce that it received a grant for \$14,500 from the Somers Education Foundation to create a Makerspace. A Makerspace is a communal area that provides students with the opportunity to be creative, innovative, and explore personal interests. A combination of technology and crafting, it encourages students to use critical thinking skills through hands on design and construction. Although the term "Makerspace" might be new to some people, the Maker movement actually began in the early 2000's. The concept grew throughout schools and libraries in 2009 when President Obama launched his "Educate to Innovate" campaign, and the first Maker Faire was held at the White House in 2014.

While every Makerspace looks different, they all contain some combination of technology and crafting creativity. In our Makerspace, both aspects will be equally represented. Our technology area will let students to explore new skills before committing to a class, or expand upon skills that they've learned previously. The SEF grant will allow us to purchase 5 new HP laptops, a 3D printer and pens, and virtual reality goggles. There will be several smaller computer/robotics kits that would also provide students with hands-on opportunities. A SparkFun kit, Raspberry Pi, and different levels of programmable robots will be available for students interested in various types of coding. Their purpose is to build off of the knowledge base obtained through Tech Ed classes at MBA and SHS. With the help of the district's technology department, we are also hoping to reconfigure our current audio/visual studio into an area that would allow students to investigate stop motion animation, podcast and movie production, and green screen technology. The art component of the Makerspace will be an area where students will be able to destress or pursue hobbies or talents that do not fit into their current curriculum. It would include a Cricut vinyl/paper cutter, a heat press, a button maker, and a sewing

machine, as well as more traditional crafting options such as yarn, beads, coloring books, and origami.

Students are not the only ones who will have access to the maker space. Several teachers have already discussed ways the tools in the Makerspace would be able to expand and enhance their curriculum and have offered to share their expertise in certain areas. Over the summer, part of the media center will be reconfigured to make room for the new area so that it will be up and running at the start of the next school year. The Makerspace will be available for students to use during study hall, as well as before and after school. We are so excited to have the opportunity to provide students with a 21st-century learning environment!

MIMIO TEACH

Mimio Teach is the new smart board for the classroom. The SEF has graciously given us a grant to purchase 10 units for our classroom teachers.

With a MimioTeach system, you can easily:

- Turn any ordinary whiteboard into an interactive whiteboard.
- Encourage participation at the whiteboard.
- Search the MimioStudio Gallery for ready-to-use lesson content.
- Enliven lessons with audio, video and Flash files.
- Record video lessons to reuse whenever you want.
- Record audio files using your computer's microphone.
- Import existing lessons from Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat.
- Save your whiteboard notes and drawings to your computer.

We are very excited about adding this technology to our instructional tools that will surely benefit all students at SHS.

CAREER CORNER

Wildlife Biology Guest Speaker Forum

Helena Rheault, Somers High School alumni (class of 2014), returned to school recently to share her career trajectory to become a wildlife biologist and research scientist with 70 students. As a graduate student at Trent University in Ontario, Canada, Helena has studied large mammals in Africa and is currently investigating wolf behavior in Northern Ontario. She explained how she spends time working outdoors, in the field, collecting data and contributing to scientific papers that deepen our understanding of wild animals. "Reflect on your interests and passions, take advantage of every opportunity, learn to network and believe in yourself," she told students.



Pratt & Whitney Career Day

In April, 15 students participated in a Career Day at Pratt & Whitney in E. Hartford with Mr. Roy Slater, Tech Ed Teacher and Ms. Meg Duffy, Career Specialist. Students attended hands-on workshops in communications & social media, digital technology, global supply chain management, design engineering, manufacturing and jet engine maintenance. Somers alumni Julie Marquis (class of 2006) and Kevin Duffy (class of 2003), both engineers at Pratt, joined us at the event. See the Fox 61 news report that aired on April 20 that featured our students.

<https://fox61.com/2019/04/30/students-experience-hands-on-career-day-at-pratt-and-whitney/>



Junior Achievement Entrepreneurship Academy

Congratulations to Senior Nick Mendez who recently completed the Junior Achievement (J.A.) Entrepreneurial Academy at The Hartford Financial Services Company in Hartford. The Academy is a unique opportunity that brings area students together at corporate sites to gain skills in entrepreneurship, leadership, teamwork, ethics and career development. Youth must apply and be accepted by J.A. to the program. Students interested for next year should see Ms. Duffy in the Counseling & Career Center.

UCONN Early College Experience

Over 60 rising juniors and seniors applied to the UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) program for the 2019- 2020 school year. Somers High School is one of 208 high schools across the state offering ECE courses. This is an academically rigorous program where motivated students can earn both high school and college credit from UConn.

Students must be recommended by their content area teachers to be eligible. We currently offer AP/ECE courses in U.S. History, English 12 and Biology.

Faculty instrumental in this effort include high school teachers Mr. Phil Goduti, Ms. Mindy Lajeunesse and Ms. Karen Legg. All three are certified as adjunct professors at the University. Ms. Tenley Stoltz, our Media Library Specialist, has been trained to offer UConn academic library resources to ECE classes. Ms. Meg Duffy, who is also our Career Specialist, serves as the program facilitator.

Art in the Big City

The Honors Art students had a great time on the annual field trip to New York City! Students in this class raised money selling a custom designed t shirt to offset the costs of their trip. With chaperones, Ms. Burda and Ms. Curran, students visited the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of art and dined in Grand Central Station and explored a bit of real New York travel, walking through Times Square and taking the subway! We were joined by former AP Art student (and now working graphic designer!), Erika Bushey, at the Met on Saturday.





SHS Music Department Update

On March 27th, we hosted Somers' third annual All District Concert where students from the elementary, middle and high schools had a great time being able to perform music with others from different grades. Here are some of the things they had to say:

“This concert impacted me by showing how students from different grade levels can cooperate to play the music well.”

“I think my favorite moment was see the excitement in the little kids faces when they first began to play with us. They were all very excited to play with us, and couldn't wait for the concert.”

In April, the Music and Drama departments hosted a trip to NYC to see “Dear Evan Hansen” on Broadway! The trip was a tremendous success. The show was very emotional and relevant to many of the challenges the students are currently facing as young adults in this age of social media.

May 15th, during our classes, our Somers High School Chorus and Honors Choir will work with Dr. James Spillane, Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at the University of Connecticut. We are really excited for this opportunity!



Our next concert, the Celebration of the Arts, or COTA, will be on May 22nd, starting at 5:30pm. There will be a cabaret of solo performances, the International Thespian Society awards will be presented, the Honors Art students will be showcasing their portfolios, food trucks will be on hand and the culinary department is hosting a watermelon carving contest!. We conclude with

a brief formal concert highlighting our music ensembles. The purpose of this night is to show that all kinds of art are greatly appreciated in our community. Tickets are \$8 and can be purchased at www.SomersMusicPatrons.org.

The annual Memorial Day Celebration is scheduled for May 25th at 10:00 am. For the past eighteen years, a Memorial Day committee has been student-led at Somers High School. This year's team is especially devoted to making the performance extraordinary and is chaired by SHS senior Sam Barile. All are invited to come and remember our soldiers who lost their lives during their service to this country. The performance is free to attend and runs for an hour and a half.

We would also like to wish our honors choir good luck as they prepare for their upcoming contest! They will be performing on May 31st for the Fantastic Festivals adjudication. Break a leg you guys! We know your hard work will pay off and you will make us proud.

SHS Sports

With spring sports entering the final weeks of the regular season and post-season tournaments fast approaching, all teams are in full swing despite the continuous bad weather. Following wins over Canton and Conard this week, our boy's lacrosse team has (12) wins and is currently ranked first in Class S while also tied for first in the NCCC with Granby. The girls lacrosse team's recent win over Rockville sets up next week's senior day while playing Rockville again on May 14th. Our softball team is off to a very good start with 8 wins, and is currently ranked 13th in Class S. The baseball team's recent win over HMTCA sets up key games over the next two weeks in trying to qualify for the state tournament. Our track and field team has one regular season league meet on their schedule on May 14th at Ellington High School, as several athletes continue to qualify for the NCCC and state championships. The weather has affected our golf team the most, as our home course has restricted competitive play throughout the spring. Despite the limited amount of play, the golf team has won (4) of their first (5) matches. Our boy's co-op tennis team with Enfield currently has a record of 3-4 in the CCC and will have several home matches left at Enfield High School prior to the CCC and CIAC tournaments. Please refer to the school sports website for links to all schedules and sites for the remainder of the regular season and as our teams advance into post-season play. The spring sports awards date will be announced soon, and 2019 fall sports sign-ups have been opened on the school sports website..

IMPORTANT DATES

5/10 – Senior Outing
5/17 – Courage to Speak Presentation
5/17 – Prom 6-10 PM @ Log Cabin
5/22 – Celebration of the Arts Concert

5/25 – Memorial Day Concert
5/27 – No School, Memorial Day
5/30 – Senior Banquet @ Ellington Ridge
6/4 – Senior Awards 6:30 PM
6/6 – Underclass Awards 7:45 AM
6/12 – Last Day of School
6/12 – Graduation 6 PM
6/13 – Staff PD Day
Spring Sports Awards TBD

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